(c) if so, what are the reaons for not fixing a time period to clear all such GPF claims; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to improve the above situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir, the Office of the Controller of Defence Accounts (Funds) is keeping its records updated in respect of G.P. Funds of the Civilian Defence Employees based on the information received from units/formations and distributed Data Processing (DDP) Controllers on regular basis. Due to involvement of large number of agencies located all over the country some times delays occur in solving the discrepancies which are rectified on priority basis.

(b) On receipt of final settlement claims of the subscribers their GPF accounts are reviewed/recast and accounts completed covering the entire service and three months time is given for representing against any mistakes/errors as per Government rules. No false recoveries are made.

(c) A time limit of 30 days from the receipt of documents has already been prescribed for settlement of claims except in exceptional circumstances where records are incomplete necessiating back - reference to units/formations.

(d) Steps are taken from time to time for speedy settlement of final GPF claims by way of timely supply of Annual GPF statements, rectification of errors/omissions, circulation of check-lists to avoid incomplete claims. A Departmental Committee has also been constituted in October, 2002 to go into the aspect of improving the existing funds system with the aid of Information Technology.

Youth from Southern States Joining the IAF

2115. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a decline in the number of youth from Southern States joining the Indian Air Force;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of youth who joined Air Force during last three years, year-wise; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to check the decline?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Air Force does not follow a state based recruitment system. Eligible candidates from any state can apply for selection.

(c) A statement is attached (*See* below).

(d) Does not arise as the number recruited is a function of the vacancies available.

Statement

Recruitment in IAF

Financial Year	Airmen	Officers	Total
1999-2000	1638	452	2090
2000-2001	1677	414	2091
2001-2002	3473	400	3873
2002 (upto 6-12-2002)	2486	168	2654

Harassment to retiring Employees

2116. SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Local Audit offices of Defence establishments situated at Agra are delaying audit of Post retiring documents of retiring Defence civilian employees; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take against such offices harassing the retiring employees?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. The Department has not received any complaint regarding delay in audit of such post-retiring documents.

On review, it has also been ascertained that as on 30.11.2002 there are no such cases pending with the LAOs at Agra.

(b) Does not arise, in view of (a) above.